

## Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 NSC-05  
CPR-01 EB-08 SY-05 USSS-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 COME-00  
AID-05 IO-13 /084 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 050528

FROM AF/C

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, GB, US

SUBJECT: PRIVATE VISIT OF GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO TO U.S.

1. SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF PRIVATE VISIT TO U.S. FEB. 28-MARCH 4, PRESIDENT BONGO MET WITH A FEW U.S. BUSINESSMEN, CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS WITH AFRICA REPORT AND NEWSWEEK, ATTENDED A PRIVATE DINNER WHERE HE MET USUN AMBASSADOR YOUNG, TENDED TO PRIVATE MEDICAL PROBLEMS, AND, AS HIGH-LIGHT OF VISIT, PAID ONE-HOUR CALL ON PRESIDENT CARTER AT WHITE HOUSE. OVERRIDING PURPOSE OF VISIT EVIDENTLY POLITICAL, WITH AN EYE TOWARDS FURTHER PREPARING GROUND FOR BONGO'S ACCESSION TO OAU CHAIRMANSHIP THIS SUMMER. U.S. BUSINESSMAN MAURICE TEMPLESMAN PLAYED ROLE OF PRIVATE ADVISOR IN THIS REGARD AND WAS UBIQUITOUS PRESENCE IN NEW YORK. END SUMMARY.

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2. BONGO PARTY ARRIVED IN NEW YORK ON FEB. 28, IN PRESIDENT'S OFFICIAL DC-8. THERE IT WAS GREETED BY GABONESE EMBASSY AND MISSION PERSONNEL, ASSEMBLED AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS, ASST. SECY. SCHAUFLE, AND AF/C DESK OFFICER BLODGETT WHO REMAINED WITH GROUP UNTIL ITS DEPARTURE ON EVENING OF MARCH 4. SECRET SERVICE PROTECTION WAS PROVIDED

FOR DURATION OF VISIT. AS USUAL, ENTIRE PARTY STAYED AT WALDORF TOWERS.

3. NEWS OF MARCH 3 APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ARRIVED MORNING OF GROUP'S ARRIVAL AND MEETING WAS, OF COURSE, HIGHLIGHT OF TRIP (SEPTEL). USG AIRCRAFT ACCOMPANIED BY AF/C DIRECTOR BUCHANAN AND SENIOR PROTOCOL OFFICIALS TRANSPORTED BONGO AND SELECTED ENTOURAGE TO WASHINGTON, AND IMMEDIATELY BACK TO NEW YORK AFTER MEETING. DISCUSSION LASTED FOR OVER AN HOUR, FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON BROAD AFRICAN ISSUES AND ON PRESIDENT BONGO'S FORTHCOMING TENURE AS OAU CHAIRMAN. ON RETURN FLIGHT TO NEW YORK, BONGO EXPRESSED VIEW THAT MEETING HAD BEEN A CONSTRUCTIVE ONE AND WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED BY EVIDENCE OF TOP-LEVEL AMERICAN INTEREST IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS.

4. ASIDE FROM PRIVATE BUSINESS (WHICH INCLUDED EXTENSIVE SHOPPING EXCURSION BY MRS. BONGO, AND PRIVATE MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS BY BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND HIS WIFE), FOCUS OF VISIT WAS BASICALLY POLITICAL AND AIMED AT FURTHER PREPARING GROUND FOR BONGO'S ACCESSION TO OAU CHAIRMANSHIP THIS SUMMER. IN THIS REGARD, MEETING WITH PRESIDENT WAS OBVIOUSLY MAIN POINT OF TRIP. AFRICA REPORT AND NEWSWEEK INTERVIEWS, ARRANGED THROUGH MAURICE TEMPLESMAN AND MEDIA ADVISOR BORY, SERVED SAME GENERAL GOAL FROM PUBLIC AFFAIRS STANDPOINT.

5. IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE ON PAST VISITS, COMMERCE DEPARTMENT SCHEDULED SEVERAL CALLS BY U.S. BUSINESS EXECUTIVES (SEPTEL). THIS TIME, HOWEVER, BONGO DECLINED TO SEE ALL BUT A HANDFUL OF THEM, PREFERRING THAT THEY DEAL

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INSTEAD WITH APPROPRIATE MINISTERS (RAWIRI, OKINDA, AND MAYILA), WHO WERE ALSO AVAILABLE IN U.S. THOSE WHO DID MEET WITH PRESIDENT BONGO INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM BOEING, BROWN AND ROOT, CHARLES T. MAIN, AND PULLMAN-STANDARD. THESE MEETINGS WERE LARGELY CEREMONIAL IN NATURE; IN THE CASE OF PULLMAN-STANDARD, HOWEVER, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE COMPANY WOULD SEND A SALES REP TO LIBREVILLE AFTER MARCH 10 TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE SALE OF RAILCARS FOR TRANS-GABON RR. MOHAMMED ALI TRIED TO ARRANGE CALL ON PRESIDENT BONGO, BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF SCHEDULING CONFLICTS. HIS REPRESENTATIVES LATER SAW ONE OF BONGO'S MINISTERS, HOWEVER, AND AGREED TO VISIT GABON IN NEAR FUTURE REGARDING POSSIBLE QUOTE INVESTMENTS UNQUOTE IN GABON.

6. ON EVENING OF MARCH 1, U.S. BUSINESSMAN MAURICE TEMPLESMAN HOSTED SMALL DINNER FOR PRESIDENT BONGO AND

SENIOR STAFF, PRIMARILY AS MEANS OF ALLOWING THEM TO MEET  
USUN AMBASSADOR YOUNG. AGAIN, DISCUSSIONS CENTERED MAINLY  
ON BROAD INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, AND BONGO REPORTEDLY CAME  
AWAY WITH VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION.

7. SUBJECT OF ECONOMIC COUNSELOR CAME UP IN SEPARATE  
EXCHANGES WITH AF/C DIRECTOR BUCHANAN AND DESK OFFICER  
BLODGETT. WE INFORMED HIM THAT A NUMBER OF NEW CANDIDATES  
HAD RECENTLY BEEN IDENTIFIED, AND SHOWED HIM THE CURRICULUM  
VITAE OF ONE OF THE MORE PROMISING ONES, JEAN-JACQUES  
LESCEUX (PROPOSED BY ROBT. NATHAN ASSOCIATES). WHILE  
BONGO WAS IMPRESSED BY LESCEUX'S CREDENTIALS, IT WAS  
AGREED THAT DEPT. AND AID WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK WITH  
GABONESE AMBASSADOR KOMBILA TO IDENTIFY MOST SUITABLE  
CANDIDATE.

8. IN SUM, PRESIDENT BONGO DEVOTED HIS MAJOR ATTENTION,  
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THIS TRIP, TO GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH NEW ADMINISTRATION.  
EMPHASIS WAS ON GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BROAD INTERNATIONAL  
ISSUES IN CONTEXT OF BONGO'S ACCESSION TO OAU CHAIRMANSHIP,  
RATHER THAN ON SPECIFIC BILATERAL MATTERS. FURTHER DETAILS  
FOLLOW SEPTELS.  
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## Message Attributes

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